



Unique, Friendly, Innovative



OPENING ITS FIRST STORE IN 2002 WITH THE AIM OF PROMOTING 'SIMIT', A TRADITIONAL ANATOLIAN DELICACY TO BOTH TURKEY AND THE WORLD, SIMIT SARAYI HAS GROWN QUICKLY. RLI SITS DOWN WITH CEO ABDULLAH KAVUKCU TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE EXPANSION PLANS FOR THE COMPANY.

Beginning with a simple concept to serve fresh bagels to guests at any time of day, Simit Sarayi has grown from its first store in Mecidiyeköy to more than 400 stores across the world. The original goal of the company remains the same, to become the most recognised and widespread food chain in the world, and it continues to work towards this by offering an ample range of products, having the most up-to-date technology in its production facility and by ensuring its approach to business remain innovative.

Simit Sarayi currently has 408 stores and serves around one million customers per day. The company operates in 21 countries which include the US, UK, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, UAE, Serbia and many more.

The last 12 months have been another incredible success story for the company. "Over the past year we have added new flavours to our product ranges and taken additional steps in our journey to be the first global Turkish food retail chain," says company CEO Abdullah Kavukcu. "We also increased the number of stores within existing markets by opening 128 stores worldwide."

Over the next 12-18 months Simit Sarayi plans to open 150 additional stores across the globe and focus these openings on key markets such as the Middle East, UK and the Netherlands. The company will also launch in new markets such as Lebanon, Austria and Qatar.

"For companies such as ours that expand at such speed, it is vital

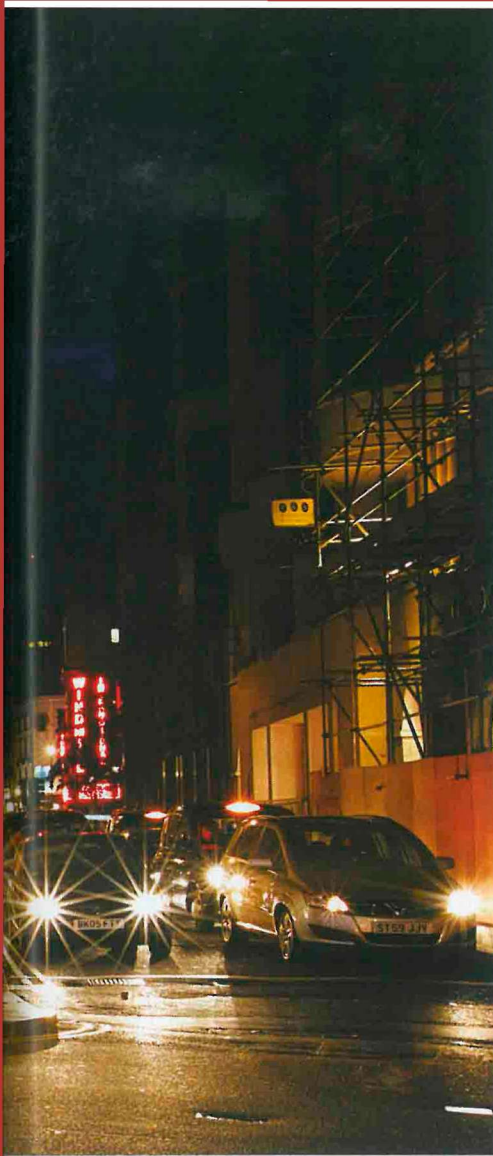
to determine the key objectives and the road map of expansion. For this reason we have business plans implemented in sectors from business development to product management, marketing to finance and every function within the company," explains Kavukcu.

Since launching in 2002, the company has steadily evolved, building its own production facility in 2005, opening its first bakery in the Netherlands in 2010 which was the bedrock for European growth, to launching its new architectural concept in 2012, new milestones are reached on a regular basis meaning the company is never standing still.

Some of the key recent openings for Simit Sarayi include 68 Oxford Street, Southampton Row and Villiers Street in the UK, one of its key markets. The company continues to grow in the UAE market through its partner Al Hokair Group, and has opened 20 stores in the last year alone. Due to high interest a second store was opened in Azerbaijan, while a new operational territory was launched in Serbia, with eight stores being acquired in the market.

"Our vision is a long and ambitious journey, we will continue to increase our store numbers in new and existing markets and we aim to reach 1,500 stores by the end of 2020," says Kavukcu.

Simit Sarayi stays at the cutting edge of the retail food industry by following consumer habits and expectations through surveys by expert research companies and it places great emphasis on research and development.



"This gives the company a great agility to respond to changing market needs and demands. To survive in a competitive environment increasingly dominated by imitation, we strive to develop 'one of a kind' and unique products to enrich the customer experience," explains Kavukcu.

So what does Kavukcu believe is the ethos of the brand? "To be unique, affordable, ethical, reliable, innovative, friendly and uphold traditional values."

The company has embraced the wave of social media, as this allows Simit Sarayi to connect directly with its consumers, updating them instantly on expansion news, events and products. With social media, the company's customer service team is able to receive and respond to customer queries quickly and effectively.

"We also welcome the growth of e-commerce and we partner with popular on-demand food delivery companies to extend our reach beyond our ever-growing portfolio of UK stores," Kavukcu explains.

Simit Sarayi remains unique by offering not only world-renowned bakery products, but also traditional and unique flavours. This combined with a superior service and high quality products with affordable prices in a friendly atmosphere means that customers remain loyal.

The key drivers behind the company's success to date are its product selection, its outstanding hospitality, and its ability to listening to its customers' needs and treating them as family.

So what lies ahead and what is the greatest challenge currently facing Simit Sarayi?

"Expansion and recognition by building loyal customer relationships," explains Kavukcu. "The greatest challenge is adaptation to culture, however with the continuing innovation of new product lines and in-depth market research it is not something we can't overcome," he concludes.

